

# Delaware Public Health: Flu Now Statewide

**DOVER** – Today, Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) announced flu is officially confirmed in all three counties with new lab-confirmed cases in New Castle and Sussex counties. The first New Castle County cases include a 77-year-old woman who was discharged following a hospital stay, and a 64-year-old male. No deaths have been reported.

The first Sussex case was an infant who is recovering at home. None of the new cases had records that they have received their flu vaccine this season.

These cases join two other lab-confirmed cases in Kent County, 27-year-old and 39-year-old men. Neither were hospitalized. There are two main types of influenza (flu) virus – types A and B – that routinely spread in people and are responsible for seasonal flu outbreaks each year.

“Now is the time to get vaccinated. We understand none of the Delaware cases were immunized, which is not uncommon this early in the season,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “But vaccination is our most effective weapon against preventing the flu and its severity. Public Health recommends getting a flu vaccine every year.”

Finding a nearby flu clinic or vaccination site is easier than ever before. Google “CDC flu finder,” enter your ZIP code, and find nearby sites offering vaccinations.

Added DPH Medical Director Dr. Awe Maduka-Ezeh, an infectious disease specialist, “It takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop antibodies protect you from the flu so now is the time to get vaccinated before the busy holiday season begins. The flu vaccine is readily available through medical providers, pharmacies, and some

grocery stores.”

Flu symptoms come on suddenly, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and body aches, and fatigue. Some people get complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. Providers can prescribe antiviral medicines to make the illness milder, hasten recovery, and prevent serious complications, hospitalizations, and even death. DPH monitors the occurrence of influenza-like illnesses in hospitals, selected long-term care facilities, and medical clinics to track flu trends in the state.

In addition to vaccination, Delawareans can prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory illness with good hygiene:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Use hand sanitizer with 60 percent alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or aiming for your inside elbow.
- Stay six feet away from others who are coughing or sneezing, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Persons with flu-like illness should stay home from work, school, and other gatherings and not return until free of fever – 100 F (37.8 C), without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.

DPH is hosting public flu clinics, including some with evening hours, at various locations. For more information on flu clinics, influenza prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, call DPH at 800-282-8672 or visit [flu.delaware.gov](http://flu.delaware.gov).

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY*

*availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.*

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.